



Coquitlam River Watershed Roundtable

*Kwikwetlem, known as "Red fish up the river.
A living river that reveals its spirit.*



Community-led Resilience for a Healthy Watershed

Muskoka Summit on
the Environment

October 4, 2024

2023 Annual Community Roundtable, Fall 2023

Margaret Birch, B.Sc., R.P.Bio.



Community-led Resilience for a Healthy Watershed

Background Context

-
- Coquitlam / Muskoka Watersheds, Organizations
 - Our Story, Community Visioning
 - What were the roadblocks?
 - How to get past the tough stuff
 - Accomplishments since forming the Roundtable
 - What has changed ?
 - Challenges/Weaknesses
 - Lessons learned, take aways

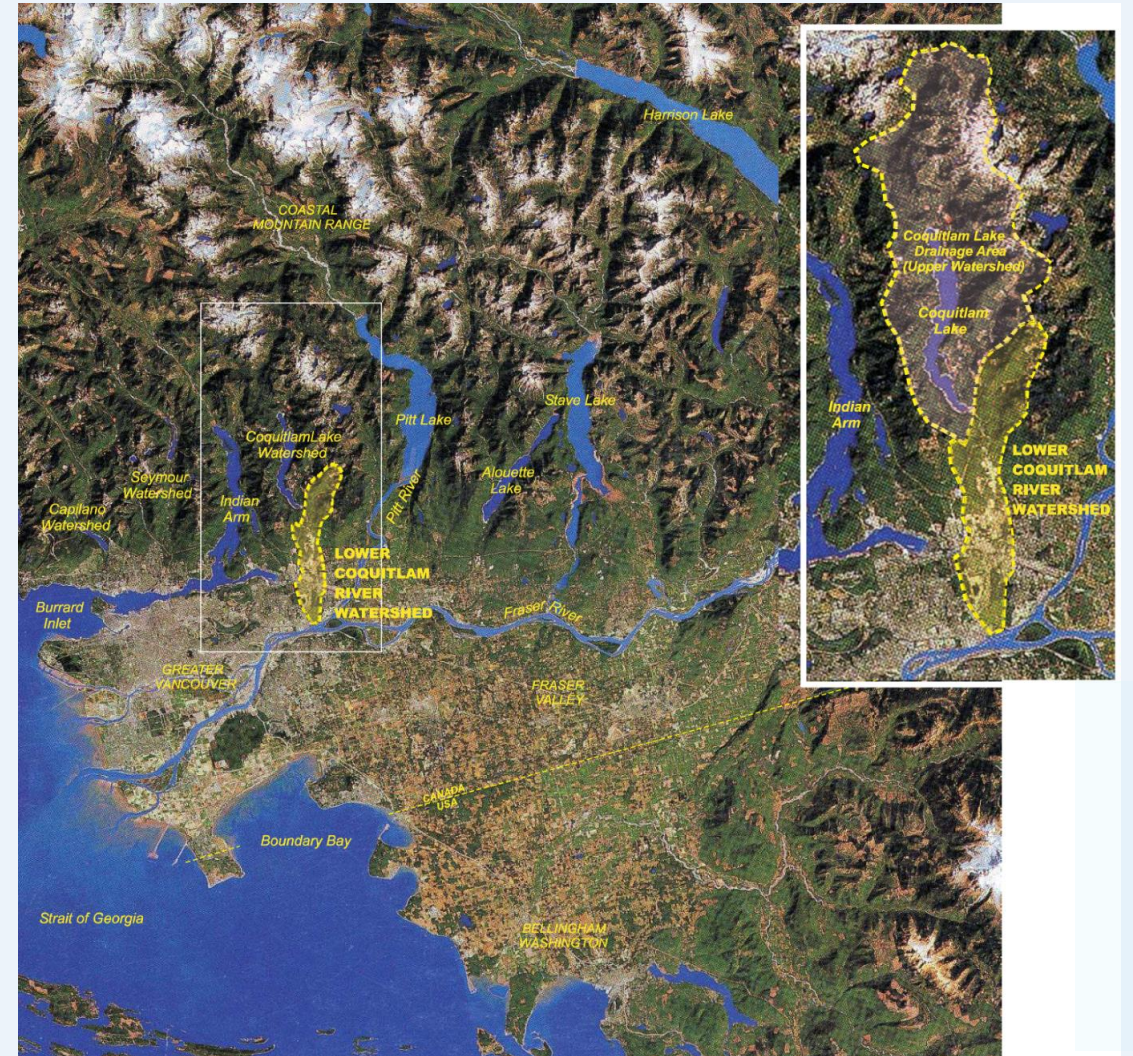


Youth-led ARTicipation Installation Project

Our Coquitlam River Watershed – Location, Watercourses, Population, History

Coquitlam River Watershed

- North shore of the Fraser River's lower reach, BC's lower mainland
- Coquitlam Dam divides watershed – water source for Metro Vancouver
- 75% of lower watershed developed – current census population
- Two cities, one First Nation territory
- Mainstem river and two sub-watersheds, 30 watercourses

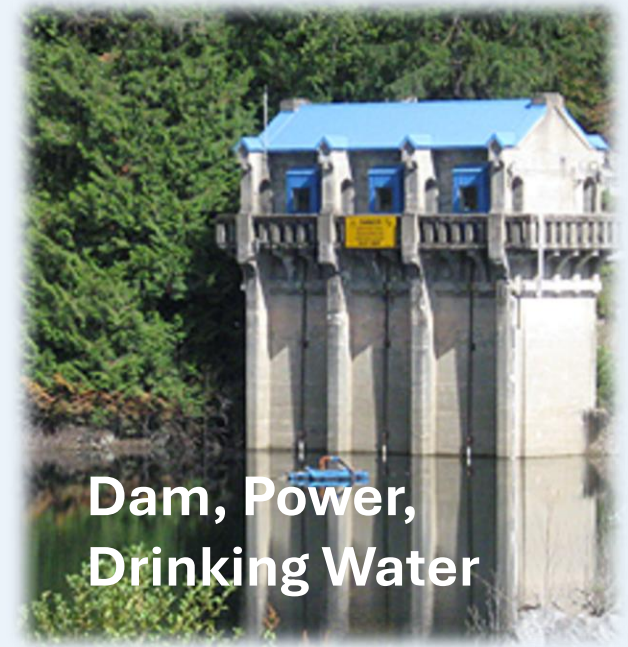




Coquitlam River



Gravel Extraction



**Dam, Power,
Drinking Water**



Two municipalities, one Regional District



Urban Development

Our Coquitlam and Muskoka River Watersheds – Population, Governments, Services, Economy

Coquitlam River Watershed

- Watershed Area - 261 km²
- Year-round permanent population – 200,000
- Two municipalities, 1 District, 1 FN territory
- Two sub-watersheds, Coquitlam Lake
- Wastewater systems outside watershed
- Water extraction for power and drinking, power generation outside watershed
- Water control structures – for one dam, intakes, few flow control gates
- Residential, sand and gravel, film production, light industry main areas of economy
- Stormwater issues affecting water quality

Muskoka River Watershed

- Watershed Area - 5,423 km²
- Permanent 69,000 / Seasonal 96,000
- 13 area municipalities, one District, one County
- Multiple villages and hamlets
- 8 municipal wastewater systems
- Multiple water control structures
- 3 navigation locks & 10 hydro generation stations
- Cottaging and tourism main economy
- Risk of flooding, increased erosion, siltation, water quality, threats to biodiversity

Our Coquitlam and Muskoka River Watershed organizations – Mission and Vision, Process



- Mission – to **preserve and enhance** the Coquitlam River watershed **through collaboration**, education and advisory action
- Vision – is a healthy watershed **supported and enjoyed by the community** in a manner that respects our common values through:
 - Partnerships and collaboration
 - Education, stewardship and monitoring
 - Conservation and green economics; and
 - Responsible decision-makingIn perpetuity
- Support to develop a watershed plan

- Mission – to **empower the community** to **protect and enhance** watershed health
- Goal – to sustain and enhance the water and terrestrial ecosystems of the area's watershed **for the environmental health, economic, spiritual and values** they provide.
- Objectives
 - Evaluate the Watersheds
 - Speak for the Watersheds
 - Communicate and Educate
 - Promote and Demonstrate
- Support to develop a watershed plan

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Our Story - Leading to develop a watershed plan

- A watershed management plan takes time
- Starting a plan needs collaboration and trust
- Ours began as a crisis – community raised issues to government entities
- Assembling a background baseline first step
- Identify all sectors, various legislative authority in the watershed

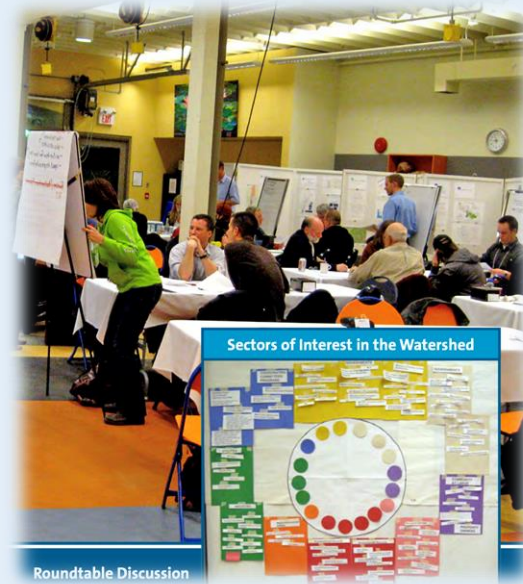


Endangered Rivers List



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Our Story – Leading to develop a watershed plan



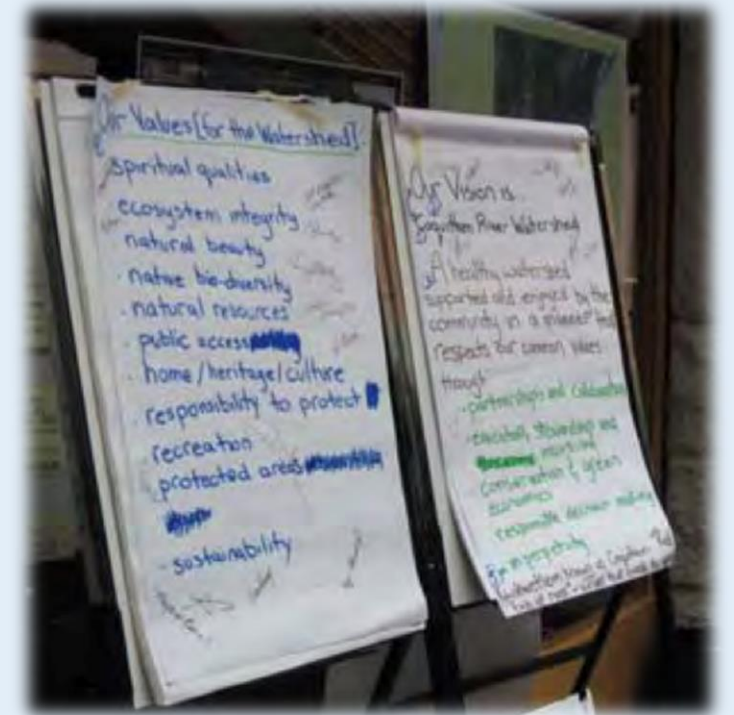
- Muskoka Watershed Council has strong support to develop a plan with community and sectors
- A community visioning process could help energize starting your watershed plan



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A Community Visioning Process – to start

- Work from your Mission, Goal and Objectives
- Interest already evident, support from municipalities
- A facilitated community vision process can work



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A Community Visioning Process – to start



-
- Apply ground rules to foster open dialogue, gather ideas
 - Develop an agreement process to move forward
 - Shake it up, mix up the sectors, set expectations
 - Everyone is welcome, don't worry about who is missing



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Roadblocks and Obstacles / Getting Past the Tough Stuff

- Missing sectors at the table
- Developing strategies was key
- Documentation of the process was vital
- Engage through education on a school bus
- Funding - facilitator, part time coordinator
- External funding - to develop the LCRWP

Sector		Organization
Local Government		City of Coquitlam
		City of Port Coquitlam
First Nations		Kwikwetlem First Nation
Regional Government		Metro Vancouver
Federal Government		Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Provincial Government		<i>Vacant</i>
Utilities		BC Hydro
Industry	Aggregate	Heidelberg Materials Ltd.
	Construction	Jack Cewe Construction Ltd.
Real Estate Development		Colliers International
Community		Vancity Savings
Stewardship		North Fraser Salmon Assistance Program
		Tri-City Green Council
		Hoy-Scott Watershed Society
Education		<i>Vacant</i>
Arts and Culture		ArtsConnect



Coquitlam River Watershed Roundtable



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Accomplishments in forming our Roundtable

- Roundtable built Business Case for stable funding
- Recognized for its success by other groups
- Multiple levels of government at the table
- Development representation since 2011
- Partnered research papers with UVic, SFU, UBC
- LCRWP strategies fully/partially implemented

Sustainable Funding Options



Recommendations for the Coquitlam River Watershed Roundtable

Funding Proposal

January 11, 2018

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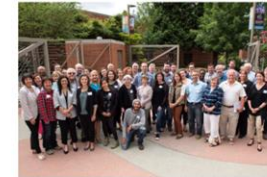


Photo: Coquitlam River Watershed Roundtable Meeting, June 11, 2017



Lower Coquitlam River Watershed Plan: Tools for Healthy Watersheds and Healthy Humans

Prepared by Joelle Karras
Student, UVic Environmental Law Clinic
ELC Project 2016-01-05
Supervised by Professor Deborah Curran

Prepared for Watershed Watch Salmon Society
June 2016



Low Impact Development in the Coquitlam River Watershed

Barriers and Facilitators in Municipal Laws



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What has changed?



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Coquitlam River
Watershed Roundtable



Revitalizing our roots for new growth

- Stable operational funding since 2019
- Annual reporting since 2019
- External grant funding opportunities improve
- Municipalities amended stream and drainage bylaws
- Cities and regional district, developers include organization in their public consultation processes
- NGO Society with a Core Committee of 13 sectors with a Board including municipal and FN



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Challenges and problems that remain

- LCRWP still needs more attention, evaluation lacking
- Recruitment is ongoing to retain sector representation
- Provincial government still pending
- Dialogue with local First Nations



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Lessons learned, advice to share

- Political and business are key to success
- Every group or process needs a Champion
- Be visible to the government and business sectors
- Sustained leadership and support
- Keep your communities informed
- People-driven community processes reconcile differences to focus achieving common goals



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Summary points



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- Integrated watershed management achievable through community-led process
 - Give it time, its messy and complicated but possible
 - Visioning will bring stakeholders together, reach consensus
 - Local municipal government critical and valued
 - Funding a Plan is attainable, but stable consistent funding for long term success is critical



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Thank-you!



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BC Rivers Day at Lions Park Rain Garden, September 2023